**Double Dower NC**

I negate. “Ought” implies moral obligation, because what is “desirable” can only be determined when couched in some ethical system. There is no such thing as independent desirability, because it begs the question of how we determine what is desirable. So, the affirmative burden is to prove that states have a moral obligation to restrain their action with regards to other nations. Otherwise, there’d be no restrictions on a nation’s choice to restrain from trading, and sanctions would be permissible. Thus, if I prove that moral obligations cannot exist within international relations, you negate.

I contend that moral obligations upon states do not exist in the international arena. Moral prohibitions can only exist if actors are willing to mutually submit to rules. Otherwise, morality ceases to be a rational and functional guide for action. Nigel Dower writes,

Hobbes was a psychologist egoist; that is he believed that all behavior was motivated by self-interest (enlightened or otherwise). So his conception of morality underlying the above is one which assumes that **the tendency towards social behavior – behavior likely to be detrimental to the interests of others unless checked – is strong and deep-rooted, and** that **the only reason why anyone would willingly submit to a framework of moral rules is that at least in general one will benefit from it oneself, and this would only be the case if one is confident that others around one will also generally observe the rules. Otherwise it would be irrational to accept the arrangement in the first place.**

Such mutuality is absent from international relations, and so the international realm lacks a conception of moral obligation. Dower[[1]](#footnote-1) 2 explains,

Hobbes’ argument is a special case of **a** more **general line of argument** which **has the following** general **structure: for moral relations to exist between different people or groups, certain features must exist. These features do not exist in the relations between states. Therefore morality does not exist in the international arena.** Hobbes’ own argument, as we have just seen, was concerned with the **[there is an] absence of a common power to make states obey common rules**, but what really lies behind this argument is the claim that **moral rules do not oblige anyone to act on them, if they have no reliable expectation that others will obey them too.** **To obey a rule without this assurance would be madness and contrary to one’s interests.** But one could similarly argue that **in the international arena there simply are not the shared traditions, practices and institutions which we are accustomed to in a ‘society’.** This is the heart of the communitarian analysis of morality as grounded in social reality. If that reality does not exist in the international arena, then **a necessary condition for the existence of moral rules is absent. So there is no morality in international relations.**

Finally, the international realm lacks a universal morality capable of obligating nations to refrain from action. Dower 3 writes,

The relativist thesis is often presented these days in the form of postmodernism. Postmodernism is a lab which can cover a bewildering range of things. In this context I shall take it to be the thesis in contrast to the modernist assumption drawn from the Enlightenment that there is something called ‘universal reason’ which can, if undistorted, deliver the same rationally grounded system of knowledge and value for all human beings. Postmodernism ‘deconstructs’ this discourse and claims that there is no such thing as universal reason; there are many different systems of knowledge, worldviews, ways of life which may simply be incommensurable. **The idea of a universal morality, a common system of value and global responsibilities is an illusion. It presupposes a monocentric, hierarchical and rationally ordered world, whereas the truth is that the world is polycentric with no natural or inherent order to it at all.** Of course **attempts to promote a system of universal values and beliefs have been made** throughout history – witness in earlier centuries the conquistadors and the holy wars of the middle ages, and **in the** modern world the **promotion of ‘universal human rights’** or a secular and liberal conception of ‘development’. **But this is really the exercise of power by one group** – often European – **seeking to impose its worldview and values** on other parts of the world. **Even though it may be the case that one day all the world will be assimilated into one value system, this would be a contingent fact about the future. It does not show that now that there is one vantage point of reason, one rational way of constructing knowledge and value.** Thus postmodernism can be seen as a powerful reaction to the ideas of a single global moral framework, and either, if it is optimistic, celebrates the diversity of human life, or, if pessimistic, regrets that fact that relations between states are, as the realist supposes, mediated by power, including the power to impose particular worldviews and value systems onto others.

Thus, states do not have moral obligations in the international realm, and you negate.

1. Nigel Dower [Senior lecturer in philosophy at the University of Aberdeen]. *World ethics: the new agenda.* Edinburgh University Press, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)